Twilight Zone

"Waiting at the Church"

Crowd outside the American Center waiting for the doors to open on a winter's night

Twilight Xns.

Intro – Just before sunrise & just after sunset – twilight – kind of half light – neither real light nor real dark. There are some Christians who may well be called Twilight Xns, who ~~neither~~ neither live in the full light of the privelege & service nor in the night of ~~total~~ unbelief or selfishness.

~~The~~ In the passage of scripture (Luke 9:57-62) Jesus mentions 3 types of Twilight Xns.

I. Lord, I will follow whithersoever thou goest.

1. The emotionally impulsive type. He determines his action by his moods. His religion is founded on feeling. He is a slave to the spectacular and has a mania for melodrama

2. His Christ is a victorious Christ, conquering all enemies & ruling supremely over all.

2. But Jesus knew that he was anything but a victorious Christ. He was an outcast, a homeless and despised X. That is why he replied, "Foxes have holes & the birds have nests but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

In other words, Jesus tells that man, "If you want follow me for my own sake, for just what I am, if you can't believe in me & be loyal to me ~~just the same as~~ when I am a failure, despised & rejected of men just the same as when I am triumphant & successful, I don't want you to follow me at all.

3). II. Another type of twilight Xn is he who determines his following of X on certain conditions. "Lord, I will follow thee, but first suffer me to go and bury my father."

"Let the dead bury their dead," is Jesus apparently unsympathetic reply. The duties we owe to parents are of the most sacred. Surely to tend to the last rites of father or mother should take precedence over everything else! What then did Jesus mean by his harsh answer?

The call of X is the call to life. It takes precedence over everything else. It is urgent + imperative. We are summoned, not to the cemetary, but to the realm of the living, to eternal life.

The man buries his father, winds up his business, attends to the 1001 demands upon him, & then at last finds that his

desire & purpose to follow X have come to an end.

This is the way of multitudes who have seen the light but have been diverted from it by circumstance, apparently important. Such diversion always proves fatal.

III. Then there is the Xn with the divided interest. "Lord, I will follow thee, but first let me go bid them farewell which are at home at my house."

There are Xns whose conscience is in their religion but whose hearts are in the world.

To them the Xn life is not a privelege, but a burdensome duty.

First let me bid good-bye to the good times I am having, let me have one last good time with my old companions. — then I will follow thee."

X's demands are met half-heartedly and performed with lagging reluctant step.

5). "No man," replied Jesus, "having put his hand to the plow, and turning back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Xn life is laborious. But it is a labor of love and its results give great satisfaction & delight. It is a work, however, that cannot be done right, with a divided allegiance. The plowman who looks back cannot plow a straight furrow. The divided life is worthless. The real Xn is he to whom X is Lord of the heart.

Let me give you John E. Stutzhell's "The Acid Test of the Years."

How have the years affected you? How have you reacted to the experiences of life? How have you met disappointment, failure, reverse? How have you wrestled with pain, calumny, bereavement? How have you borne your honors, prosperity and responsibilities? Are you more of a man, or less, because of them? How

have the waning of your dreams and the collapse of your illusions left you? Have you become bitter, cynical, sceptical? Have you lost faith in men and, what is worse, even in God and the kindly Providence that shapes our lives?

Have you now reached "the seat of the scornful"? Do you scout any such thing as goodness and virtue? Are you morose, irritable; jealous and vengeful? Is your idea of the universe still only that which pertains to your own small interests? Then the acid test of the years has been too severe for you; you have failed.

May none of us so live as to come to the end of our days with the words of the broken patriarch on our lips: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." Rather let us choose the glowing words of the apostle Paul: "I have fought a good fight! I have kept the faith!" By those triumphant phrases we mean: I have been loyal to my ideals; I have held to the best that I knew. With whatever of mortal variation, my course has been towards the pilot star. I have met difficulties, but I have vanquished, or else I have defied and ignored them. I have encountered troubles, but I have risen above them. I have gone down into the great welter of life as into a mighty arena, and I have there played my part, but I have come out of it uncontaminated, with spirit still free, regnant, aspiring.

Whatever your sphere of life, if you have kept strong and calm; if you are bearing your burden bravely and suffering your pain patiently; if, despite all their follies and sins, you still believe in man and in his possibilities of progress, affection and goodness; if, in spite of the clouds that surround you and the enigmas that baffle you and the anomalies that mock at you, you still believe in the great God who stands in the shadow keeping watch above his own—then you have met the acid test.

Yours is a type of success that is worth while; you are gaining riches that can never disappoint. Your victory is one that glorifies life, blesses mankind, enriches the universe.

Twilight Xns never stand the acid test of the years.

7). "I came that you might have life"

Last summer I had the privilege of inducing a friend to try swimming in the ocean. A fairly good swimmer, but only a tank swimmer in water comfortably warm. He said that the ocean was too cold, but I knew that he was afraid of the breakers. I took him beyond the breakers where the swells lift you up & let you down gently. When my friend became accustomed to the ocean he said, "Gee, this is more fun than the plunge."

Christianity might be likened to a plunge in the surf. The folks who enjoy it the most are those who go out beyond the breakers. Christ said to launch out into the deep. Don't be a halfway Christian. If you would have real, solid enjoyment, go into religion for all you are worth. Give God the best you have.

The people who get most out of life are the ones who give the most. Don't be so wrapped up in yourself. Think about the other fellow. Forget your own troubles, and problems and difficulties, and in forgetting and losing yourself in this way, you will find God. The people who are the happiest in this world are those who are helping others. If you want to have some real enjoyment and lasting happiness, start out right now, with the determination to help all the folks you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can. The self-centered man is never happy. The "more abundant life" is for the man or woman who are giving their time, energy, money and influence to make this world a better place to live in, and thus in bringing happiness into the lives of others, they are bringing happiness into their own lives.

Third Place — Motto — I am willing to be 3rd.
"My mother gave it to me — She said if I would live a happy helpful life I must be willing to put God 1st, others 2nd & self 3rd."

Achilles — heel — Arrow of Trojan Paris
Twilight Ks have weak spots — open to enemy
True, whole-hearted Ins are protected all over & can resist all temptations.